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Members of the Health Policy Committee
Capitol Building
100 South Capitol Avenue
Lansing, Michigan 48933

February 15, 2016

Subject: SB 753 and Telemedicine in Michigan

Dear Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of 44North, a Michigan-based insurance and benefits agency, to ask for your support for forward-thinking telemedicine policies such as SB 753. Our company is dedicated to helping make the healthcare system more efficient and consumer-friendly, and we believe that high-quality telemedicine is essential to that effort.

Escalating healthcare costs put a significant strain on employees' and employers' budgets. 44North works with Teladoc, the nation's first and largest telehealth provider, to provide clients with affordable and convenient access to treatment for common illnesses. This tool has permitted our clients to realize significant savings, given that the cost of a telehealth visit is a fraction of the cost at a traditional doctor's office, urgent-care clinic, or hospital emergency room. Furthermore, the convenience of a telehealth visit allows employees and employers to avoid costly operational interruptions that result from workers taking leave and spending hours at a medical facility.

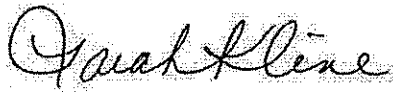
44North and our clients represent over 20,000 lives across the State of Michigan currently accessing telemedicine services through Teladoc. As a user of telemedicine for myself and my family, we see this service as a very valuable tool in our overall healthcare. It saves us time, keeps our healthcare spending manageable, and we feel good knowing that our doctors are able to spend more time treating others with more serious illnesses and conditions in person than our common colds.

Telemedicine is not designed to replace traditional healthcare delivery methods. Instead, it serves as a valuable complement to existing resources. With the increased number of insured individuals due to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the number of physicians has not increased at the same rate. Telemedicine assists existing health care providers in keeping up with the demand for services, and if members request, Teladoc will share consultation notes with their primary care physician to ensure continuity of care.

Consequently, we believe public policy should be technology neutral, and telemedicine providers should be held to the same standards as physicians who have physical offices, rather than be held to arbitrary, medically unnecessary conditions that simply limit access to care and drive up overall costs. Licensed and certified physicians should be permitted to exercise their professional discretion when deciding whether a patient should receive a prescription drug that is not a controlled substance.

We appreciate the opportunity to discuss our view of telemedicine and the vital role that it plays in today's healthcare system. Again, we respectfully request your support for SB 753.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Kline". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Sarah Kline
Operations Manager
44North